



Veterans Home - Chippewa Falls

Covid Positive Updates 10.23.2020

Dear Family and Friends –

Covid Updates

I am saddened to inform you that three more employees have tested positive for COVID-19 since our last update. One of these employees has not worked at the Veterans Home in over a month. Thankfully, we had one employee recover since our last update, too. Here is our current information:

Current Active COVID-19 Confirmed Positive:	6 (one contracted individual, five employees)
Current Active COVID-19 Suspected:	0
Cumulative COVID-19 Confirmed Positive:	11 (one member, nine employees, one contracted individual)
Cumulative COVID-19 Suspected Positive:	2 (one member, one employee)
Total Recovered Individuals:	7 (two members, five employees)

We urge everyone to limit your exposure out in the community as much as possible. Only perform necessary tasks, and ensure proper mask, sanitizer, and social distancing when out and about. We need everyone to be safe so we can get through this. We are asking the same of our employees, as well.

Updates:

If anyone else in your family would like to be added to those lists, please let Katie Plendl know. at 715-720-6775 or Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov.

Infection Control Plan

Our COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Response Action Plan ensures we're taking every possible step to protect you and our members by following all guidance from federal, state, and local health officials. Please read this entire plan below.

All staff and members will continue to be tested for COVID-19 at least twice per week. We also recently supplied all members with KN95 masks to wear when near others or when out of their rooms for added protection. See below for the rest of the plan.

Visits

We understand visitation restrictions have been difficult for everyone. Please know we're following guidance set by health officials, so we continue safeguarding everyone's health and safety.

Unfortunately, the snow creates a safety hazard for window visits and we are not recommending you conduct these closed window visits for your safety. If you choose to come to do a closed window visit, please be very careful. There is a lot of snow on the lawn currently. In addition the road construction is almost complete, but still be careful and mindful if you are visiting someone on the AB neighborhood.

If you have questions or concerns, contact Katie Plendl at 715-720-6775 or veterans.home-CF@dva.wi.gov Thank you.

Sincerely,
Megan Corcoran

Veterans Home COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Response Action Plan

First and foremost, our priority is to keep everyone safe and healthy. We are in close contact with our medical director, WDVA, other providers, and state and local health officials to ensure we are taking all appropriate steps at this time. We are following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and state and local health officials to protect our members and staff from this virus, and are taking every action possible to prevent it from spreading in our care community.

The following is a summary of our COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Response Action Plan.

- Utilizing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), as directed by CMS guidelines. Staff continues to wear PPE, including masks, eye protection, gloves, and gowns depending on the community's COVID-19 status. Members are asked to wear a face covering when interfacing with others or when out of their rooms.
- Screening and monitoring members and staff for symptoms. We have increased our screening and monitoring of members and staff for COVID-19 symptoms. COVID-19 symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.

We all play a part in keeping ourselves and others healthy. Please wash your hands often, avoid touching your face, cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, wear a mask or face covering, and practice social distancing.

We continue to educate members and staff on COVID-19. For additional information, please visit the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html or the Wisconsin Department of Health's website at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov.

- Tracing individuals who come in contact with anyone affected. The community will work with the tracing staff from state and local health departments to assess all who may have come in close contact with an affected individual. We will continue to follow all requirements in implementing the next steps which may include self-monitoring as determined by health officials.
- Testing members and staff for COVID-19. We are following all guidance from federal, state and local health officials on testing required for members and staff. The frequency of routine testing is determined based on the number of COVID-19 cases in the local county. Additionally, those who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms are tested to quickly identify and isolate members and staff who may be positive for COVID-19. Once there is a confirmed COVID-19 case, testing is increased to every three to seven days until testing identifies no new cases of COVID-19 infection among staff or members for a period of at least 14 days since the most recent positive result.
- Quarantining COVID-19 positive members and implementing enhanced infection control measures. We have established a designated area in the building for any COVID-19 positive members, and they are cared for and supported by designated staff. We continue to follow all infection control protocols as outlined by the CDC, CMS, and state and local health officials. COVID-19 positive members remain in quarantine until well and cleared by medical professionals, as well as meet the CDC symptom-based criteria for return to normal activity.

- Advising COVID-19 positive staff to take all appropriate measures. For the health and well-being of our care community, any staff member with a COVID-19 diagnosis is asked to quarantine at home, contact a medical provider for care, and notify their supervisor. We are following CDC guidance on the return-to-work criteria for health care professionals with confirmed COVID-19.
- Taking environmental safety precautions. Housekeeping staff continues to take extra measures to clean and disinfect all high-touch areas throughout the building. This includes countertops and tables, faucet handles, toilet flush handles, doorknobs, door handles, crash bars, bathroom and kitchen areas, elevator call buttons, and handrails.
- Adhering to safe visitation procedures. We are committed to offering visitation that supports each member's physical, mental, psychosocial well-being, and quality of life. Visitation may be conducted through different means based on the community's structure and members' needs, such as in member rooms, dedicated visitation spaces, outdoors, and for circumstances beyond compassionate care situations.

Please know the visitation options may vary based on the community's COVID-19 status. To discuss current visit options and schedule a visit with a loved one, contact Katie Plendl at 715-720-6775 or at Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov. Currently as of today, closed window visits and virtual visits are available. No reservation is needed for window visits.

Closed Window Visits: Closed window visits pose no risk of virus transmission.

Outdoor Visits: Outdoor visits pose a lower risk of virus transmission due to increased space and airflow. Therefore, outdoor visits are preferred whenever practicable.

Indoor Visits: Indoor visits will be offered based on the following guidance and criteria from CMS:

- The community has had no new onset of COVID-19 cases in the last 14 days and is not currently conducting outbreak testing.
- Visitors must adhere to the core principles of infection control and will be monitored by staff, including appropriate mask use, social distancing, and hand hygiene.
- For the safety and well-being of those in the community, there are a limited number of visitors allowed at one time. Two visitors per member can be accommodated. Visits will generally take place in a common area inside the community that is cleaned and sanitized regularly and between visits. Additionally, the community maintains a calendar that identifies the days, times, and length of potential visits.

Virtual visits: We encourage loved ones to communicate with members by phone, letters, video chat, and/or social media. We understand that it is hard to not have visitors, especially family. Please contact the community at 715-720-6775 for questions or assistance with these communication methods.

Compassionate care visits: Visitors who need to enter the community for compassionate care situations are evaluated on a case-by-case basis to assure safety for all.

Please note the community will screen visitors for COVID-19 when they arrive for outdoor, indoor, and compassionate care visits.

We are excited to see our members reunite with their loved ones when able!

- Assuring safe congregate dining and group activities. Communal dining and congregate group activities may be offered while adhering to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention. This includes social distancing, face covering, and appropriate hand hygiene by members and staff.

We continue to be in close communications with our medical director, WDVA, other providers, and state and local health officials. We are also monitoring new information from the CDC, CMS, and state and local health departments to ensure we are taking the appropriate next steps.

Thank you for your support and understanding; we are all in this together. Please do not hesitate to contact Katie Plendl, Director of Admissions and Marketing at 715-720-6775 or Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov with any questions or concerns you may have.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Megan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Megan M. Corcoran, NHA | Administrator
Wisconsin Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls